

BOOKS OF THE SEASON.

ILLUSTRATED EDITIONS—NEW PUBLICATIONS AND OLD FAVORITES.

The English rural life of the later Georgian period had no contemporaneous historian more gifted than Miss Mitford, and since her death it has had no more successful interpreter in pictorial art than the illustrator of the new edition of "Our Village" (Macmillan & Co.). We might go further in eulogy of Mr. Hugh Thomson and say that not one of his predecessors, no matter how far back you go, has surpassed him in preserving the very spirit of a long vanished generation, rosy-cheeked, poke-bonnetted and intensely British. George Morland, famous as an animal painter, was also a noted illustrator of the life among the villagers and farm-people of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He painted these men and women so well that the rustic genre of his time may be said to have reached its highest expression in his really inspiring art. His pictures are incomparable for bald truth, for an English quality as unaffected as that of an English village itself. Yet Morland made his women buxom rather than gracefully idle, his men more reminiscent of the stable and the plough than of the hay barn and the sweet-smelling hedge-bordered roads. He chose, and chose wisely, the most admit, the most unmistakable features of nature. But on the side of history that is idealized in fictitious literature, seen through a veil of sentiment and fancy, on the side of history which Goldsmith knew, or Mrs. Gaskell, or Miss Mitford, the inhabitants of rural England have a quaintness and humor which make them more companionable than Morland's sturdy hobsbairns and robust dairymaids. It is this quaintness and this humor which Mr. Thomson co-operates perfectly with Miss Mitford to re-create in the new edition of "Our Village." Mrs. Ritchie, who contributes a pleasant introduction to the book, surmises that she is the only living author who in childhood had the exciting experience of wearing pottos. The only living artist who can give you a true picture of the time when pottos were an everyday article of dress is Mr. Thomson. In that picturesque and, not after all, so terribly remote age, he is absolutely at home. With what ease and spontaneity he sketches the village girl in bonnet, plumes, ribbons and high-waisted, fur-trimmed gown! What reality there is in the smiles and smocks of his gentlemen, shepherds and barn-yard yokels! And how thoroughly alive are the waters of these habitations! From the demureness of his maidens to the benevolence of his old ladies, from the harmless vanity of his beaux to the matchless vacuity of his merry bumpkins he never misses a shade of expression. And through all his scenes and groups, through all his spirited pictures, there goes a clean, breezy tone which carries one back straight to the fragrance of the English country side. In his drawings for "Our Village," Mr. Thomson has outdone himself. His sympathy, developed steadily through his study of the time, has in this book reached a far-advanced stage, and his draughtsmanship has kept pace with his sympathy. Never have his drawings been better conceived or better executed. Even his cows are poetic.

If there is to be a renaissance of formal gardening at this latter end of the nineteenth century, and if America is to share in its glories, the efforts of more than one recent writer on the subject will be remembered with gratitude. But it is doubtful if any one will have accomplished as much in propagating the architectural idea in matters of gardening as the author of "Italian Gardens" (Harper & Brothers). The chief service which Mr. Platt has done in preparing this handsome book has been to select the best subjects for a series of illustrations. His taste is trustworthy and the reproduction of the photographs has been left in safe hands. He places before us, therefore, an artistic pictorial sketch of the most artistic country residences in the world. Alluding to the villas on the hills of Frascati, which are distinguished in a remarkable degree by the magnificence and eccentricity of their aerial sites, Mr. Platt remarks that the builders of these retreats "rarely allowed ideas of convenience to interfere with their desire to produce a beautiful effect." This formulation in a line the spirit in which the Italian villas were conceived. We are justified in assuming that a strong sense of architectural unity controlled their original designers—much as they have suffered from the caprice of later times—but what is written even more clearly across the terraces and groves of these enchanted gardens is the lavishness of scale with which they were created, and the imperial splendor with which their aristocratic owners lived rich upon riches until they renewed the loveliness of fairland itself. In works like the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, or the Villa Lante near Viterbo, the doctrine of art for art's sake was followed to the very last clause. The object of their early proprietors seems to have been nothing but the production of an artistic effect, so purely and singly do they minister to our sense of what is rhythmic, poetic and sensuous in architectural art. Take the fantastic fragment from the Guelist Ascens which Mr. Platt reproduces, the stately ascent of terraces which appears in one of his illustrations of the Villa d'Este, or the bosquet at Portici, which represents his sole selection from the villas of the south. It requires no exaggeration to figure these visions of glimmering rountains, sunny box-bordered paths, gliding terraces and mournful cypress groves with marble nymphs and fauns, as glimpses of the land in which Aladdin lives and rubs his magic lamp. There is, indeed, as much of Aladdin in the beauty of Italian villas as they exist to-day as there is of the men who designed them—an admission which takes nothing from the legitimate laurels of the latter, earned by their genius for structure and picturesque effect. Whatever inspiration the villas have for modern builders is inspiration of an architectural character; but the elements in their spirit of which an unprofessional observer is most instinctively sensible are elements of mystery, of romantic and historical suggestion, of extraordinarily vivid natural grace. No constructive blemishes introduced by modern hands, no florid details marking the trail of Bernini and his followers, no criminalities of neglect can in the long run diminish the phantom-like opulence of these gardens. Even in their decay they are superb, and in spite of their decorative note, their memories of private rather than of civic life, they share more than do any of the urban palaces of Italy the attribute of Roman grandeur which is associated with the peninsula. Hadrian, in his great villa at Tivoli, outshone all builders who succeeded him as Rome outshone all other cities; but the spirit of dignified pomp with Hadrian crystallized in his Villa of Canopus is the spirit which presided over the erection of such country seats as overlook the Campagna from the heights of Tivoli and Frascati. Superlatives are inevitable in speaking of them. Therefore we do not hesitate to say that there could be no more beautiful gift book than Mr. Platt's, because there could be no more beautiful subject than the one he has treated; and in his pictures, which are the main thing, he has done it justice.

The third volume of the new edition of "A Short History of the English People," by the late John R. Green, which Messrs. Harper & Brothers are publishing, has just appeared in time for the Christmas book-buyers who desire something of solid merit. It opens with a survey of the Puritan movement in English society on the eve of the seventeenth century, passes through the successive stages of parliamentary and military events which finally led to the restoration of Charles II, and carries the narrative down to the dissolution of Parliament, under the pressure of Shaftesbury, in 1679. It embraces a period from which there has been no richer in the annals of England for the

purposes of illustration—purposes with which this edition is principally concerned. Van Dyke came to England in 1632, and his sojourn at court furnishes the most satisfactory relics of portraiture with which the editors of the book have been privileged to enrich their pages. The "Lord Strafford," the "Sir Edmund Verney" and the "William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle," of Van Dyke add the last touch of reality to Mr. Green's animated text. Inigo Jones was also a celebrity of the seventeenth century, and several of his sketches are reproduced in fac-simile. They are of more than casual point. Jones was employed, as designer by both James I and Charles I. The scenery and costumes for the masques then in favor were due to his art, which in this province of Jacobean fancy was far more decorative and playful than the sedate baroque of the hall of Whitehall Palace, his finest architectural work would lead us to suppose. He met the satirists of the court half way, reinforcing their caustic passages with a facility of caricature which must have counted heavily in the scales poised at that time on such a sensitive centre of public feeling. The drawing of a costume for "Knickerbocker," the Anabaptist, reminds us how deftly he co-operated with his patrons. It is in iconography of this curious description, not always so pregnant with contemporaneous passion, but illustrative, nevertheless, in the same unexpected and quaint fashion, that the present volume is richest. Here and there is a picture like Jones's "Knickerbocker," or like the Cavalier playing-cards reproduced from fac-similes of Earl Nelson's examples and alive with royalist sarcasms. Everywhere there are cuts like the medal reproduced on page 1215, a production made by Thomas Simon to commemorate the victory of Dunbar, and based on a suggestion of Cromwell himself; like the three-pound gold-piece of Charles I. coined at Oxford in 1643; or like Holiar's picture of Westminster as it appeared in the time of Charles. It is not easy to cease specific comment on these illustrations. They show, on the whole, an improvement upon the earliest volume of the series, possibly because there have been more and better authorities upon which to draw. We have found fewer mechanical defects also. English history has never been so well illustrated in popular form as in this new edition of a standard work.

Sir Philip Sidney's writings are compounded of qualities which he drew in part from the resources of his own nature and in part from the general literary habit of his time. This deduction is confirmed with particular force by the "Arcadia," of which a beautiful new edition in octavo has been published by Charles Scribner's Sons. The enthusiasm and the intuitive perception of what is poetic which underlies the superfluity of rhetoric in his "Defense of Poesie" were born in him. The sincerity and the lyric impetus declared in some of his verse could not have been acquired. They were his essential attributes. In the pastoral romance which he wrote for the Countess of Pembroke he is before all things, and in the very essence of his art, an Elizabethan, an exponent of a mode of expression and even of design which was practised by dozens of old English poets and prose writers. Intrinsic to the book is a literary curiosity, with certain elements of vitality which can never die—spontaneous elements of poetic fancy. Its relative interest is greater, almost, than its significance as a labyrinth in which you may discover a thread of poetic inspiration leading to the secret of Sidney's genius. It shows how much there was in Elizabethan fiction that owed an overwhelming debt to Latin literature. Sidney's romance derives from the Spanish fiction of which Montemayor's "Diana," familiar to him, was one of the favorite examples in England on the threshold of the seventeenth century. It borrows something of its tone, too, from the delightful heroisms of Ariosto. But there was something else in the air in Sidney's day which influenced him subtly and strongly while it seemed to offend his taste and was certainly never consciously cultivated by him. We refer to the picturesque vein of literature imported from Spain (whence the pastoral romance had also been brought), and worked with great skill by Nash and Dekker. The picturesque novel as it is illustrated in the "Pablo de Segovia" of Quevedo, the "Guzman de Alfarache" of Mateo Aleman and the anonymous "Lazarillo de Tormes" is largely a novel of manners. Preeminently, however, it is a novel of action, of adventure, and it is here that it strikes a note re-echoed in Sidney's "Arcadia." What he has in common with the "Orlando Furioso" or with Montemayor's novel are the conceits of description, scenic and mechanical episodes and romantic temper. The quality he shares with the picturesque novel is a quality of rather more verve, sincere movement than was characteristic of the pastoral novelists. This is so in spite of the fact that the chord of passion which he struck was generally a minor one. From any of those thrilling episodes of passion into the serene staidness of Shakespeare's verse which impress us like a mountain crag, lifted into space by some great throes of nature, Sidney was separated by the whole length and breadth of an intellectual and spiritual world. He, the man of action, could never attain to the force which Shakespeare, the man of meditation, achieved in his plays. Shakespeare dwelt among the heights, Sidney's "Arcadia" is resident on the meadows. Yet on his pastoral plane all that was chivalrous and knightly in him rings stoutly.

Without the swagger and audacity of the typical picaresque, his fighter has something of the latter's genuine vigor of life which makes the picaresque interesting, and, above all things, a man, whatever his knowledge might say to the contrary. Thus Sidney gave to his adventure the indefinable accent of life which the realists alone were capable of reproducing, and he embellished him with all the attributes of elegance and gentle character which sprang naturally from his imagination and character. He glided stern prose with the poetic graces of Elizabethan lyricism. In this last respect the "Arcadia" is crowded with quaint surprises. The Editor of the present edition of the "Arcadia" has labored to make the novel readable by compression and by a moderate manipulation of the spelling. His excisions are justifiable—Sidney is peculiarly adapted to such treatment—and his translations into modern English are commendable in an edition addressed not exclusively to scholars. The book as it stands is well made, and presents in inviting form a work which itself is an invitation to pleasant idleness.

Your true Parisian, an ardent traveler, atones for his frequent indifference to serious issues by lifting his trifles into the region of art. Where but in the French capital would a volume like "The Book-Hunter in Paris" (A. C. McClurg & Co.) be forthcoming? The publishers announce another book on a similar side of London life, but England lacks an author who could treat the humble walks of the bibliomane as M. Octave Uzanne has treated the stalls lining the quays of the Seine. M. Uzanne is himself an expression of the French spirit. His career as a journalist, man of letters, bibliophile, has abounded in illustrations of the sparkling humor with which the truly typical Frenchman disposes of nine-tenths of the relations of life. In his latest contribution to book-collecting lore M. Uzanne has utilized the stores of a long experience, and has imbued the whole with his characteristic vivacity. The pages are sprinkled with anecdote, with observation of the casual and altogether entertaining sort. He is erudite, sympathetic, enthusiastic; everything but sentimental or dull. Book-hunting in Paris will take on a new zest for the American who reads this volume. He will have profited by a good deal of information which he did not have before, and he will have apprehended thoroughly, perhaps for the first time, the personal side of the stall-keepers with whom his quests have brought him in contact. On the personal side lies one of M. Uzanne's strongest points, as is indeed the

case with most Parisians of his tastes and occupations. He contrives, by handling his subject with great delicacy and tact, to discover of men and books without causing the latter to yield their supremacy as the life-giving factor in his sketch. Mr. Birrell has written a short preface to this translation of M. Uzanne's work, and the black and whites which illuminate the text, drawings which any one familiar with Paris will recognize at once as entirely faithful, have been reproduced in good shape. Another recent translation from the French which the publishers have brought out artistically is a version of "La Petite Fadette," of George Sand. Miss Jane Minot Sedgwick has turned the tale into English, and Messrs. George H. Richmond & Co. have published it in a small octavo, printed on the De Vinne press. The binding is unusually tasteful, and Abot's etched frontispiece, giving a portrait of the author, is a fair, if not wholly satisfactory, adornment. "Fadette," as the book is called by Miss Sedgwick, belongs to the series of idylls which includes "François le Champi" and "La Mare au Diable"—both books, by the way, which the publishers expect to issue in uniform style. It was when she wrote in her idyllic mood that George Sand was at her best. Then her sentiment was most normal, and her pictures of nature were most poetic, convincing and appropriate to the development of her plot. "Fadette" is representative of her in a phase with which American readers must find it most gratifying to become acquainted. Miss Sedgwick's translation is adequate, and the book is as pleasing to the eye as it is convenient to the hand.

No classic could find a more cordial greeting at this time of year than "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" in a new illustrated edition of two octavo volumes. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. have provided the best of paper and press work, and Mr. Howard Pyle has made a number of sketches which interpret very cleverly the figures in the book. From Dr. Holmes himself there comes a fascination that is always fresh and buoyant. How the pages run over with sunshine, and the treasures of a unique personality! It is good to see the passages that have endeared themselves to us in the fullest sense of the word, fair and crisp again as the most advanced mechanical means can make them. The publishers and the artist have met the occasion with success, and "The Autocrat" goes forth for the holidays in a guise of which he need not be ashamed, fastidious though he may be. Reprints of modern, even recent, books that are apparently fitted to stand the wear and tear of time continue to reach us. "Lorna Doone," of which we noticed a good new edition the other day, is republished also by Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. in two volumes, which fulfill the requirements of an inexpensive edition. The printing is excellent, though the illustrations are poor. A new edition, in two volumes, of Frederik Bremer's wholesome story, "The Home of Life in Sweden," has been brought out by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Human nature as it exists always and everywhere, and the old-time Swedish manners, are here portrayed with equal shrewdness and kindness. It is a story which will remain, in its homely way, a classic. The character of the Assessor, with his brusque talk and tender heart, is one of the most lovable in Northern fiction. A series of Anthony Trollope's novels, admirably printed, daintily bound, and illustrated with quiet taste, Dodd, Mead & Co. are the publishers. This series follows the previous series of "Chronicles of Barsetshire," and is in uniform style. There is also a limited large-paper edition on the publishers' list.

Especially attractive among the new reprints of standard English novelists are the editions set out by the Macmillans of the works of Henry Fielding and of the novels of the Brontë sisters—both editions being excellent specimens of book-making. Mr. George Saintsbury has edited his Fielding with a literary sympathy that is rare, his introductions to each novel being gems of lucid comment and interpretation. In his admiration for Fielding, however, we do not like to see Mr. Saintsbury forgetting his Thackeray. In his preface to "Jonathan Wild" he says, in comparing John and Iago, "I do not know that any third character of fiction can be named who, being during the time of his presentation a villain pure and simple, is yet made a perfectly human creature." What about Barry Lyndon, Mr. Saintsbury? Messrs. Herbert Raiton and E. J. Wheeler have contributed to these volumes some charming little illustrations, and a limited edition on large paper has been issued. The Brontë novels have been brought out in a style resembling that of the Fielding, and in size, shape, type and illustration are a constant pleasure to the reader. The same house is issuing the fine Dyrbyrd edition of the Waverley novels, having now reached the fourteenth volume. Each volume contains a complete novel and all are handsomely illustrated. The type is of unusually comfortable size.

Another reprint is that by Dodd, Mead & Co. of the "Journal of Eugénie de Guérin." The two volumes are delicately trim and neat in print and attire. If the reader, by the way, would see a curious contrast, let him take up first this journal and then that of another woman named Marie Bashkirtseff. Among the collected editions of the season is that of the writings of Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, published by the Scribners. This comprises four handsome volumes, of which two hold the Virginia author's short stories, the third containing his novel, "On Newfound River," and the fourth his essays on "The Old South." Mr. Page's pathetic story, "Moh Lady," is issued by the same publishers in a thin quarto uniform with the edition of "Marse Chan," which they printed last Christmas. The sketches for this booklet are by Mr. Reinhardt. The Scribners have also added Andrew Lang's "Letters to Dead Authors" and Robert Louis Stevenson's "Virginian Puerile," both charming examples of the essayist's art, to their Cameo Series. For the holidays there have been printed in limited editions on large Holland paper, and in delicate blue-and-white bindings they make a handsome appearance.

A masterpiece of humor and another masterpiece about humorists come from McClurg & Co. in two small volumes of uniform size and a general comeliness as to print and paper for which an economical public should be grateful. The price of the books is very moderate. These two volumes are Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" and Thackeray's "English Humors." Every really popular edition of these books, such as the McClurgs have brought out, is a distinct boon. Of how much there is that is constructive and beneficial in the pretty two-volume edition of "Humour," issued by the same publishers, we cannot give a very flattering estimate. It is almost with a feeling of disloyalty, nevertheless, that we call to mind Miss Sheppard's sentimentality. "Charles Auchester" belongs to the brighter memories of youth, and so in a lesser degree does "Humour." But sentimentalism, that is, the falling and there is no reason apparent why her voice should ever cease. Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Joachim and other musical celebrities who move through her narratives in thin disguise will always be interesting, and no one has ever put them into novels with more tact than Miss Sheppard discloses. To this new edition of "Humour" there is prefixed a cordial note by Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford. If Miss Sheppard, with all her cleverness, leaves us in doubt as to whether sentimentality is a falling or not, Miss Edgeworth certainly does not. "Ennui" and "Leonora," the third and fourth volumes in the dainty reprint of her novels published by Dodd, Mead & Co., give the answer in the negative. Perhaps it is because Miss Edgeworth's sentimentality is so wholly naive, so wholly sentimental and not partially musical, artistic or literary. It is without question enter-

taining to dip again into her old-fashioned romances; and when, as in "Leonora," she employs the epistolary form she is delightful out of sheer native idiosyncrasy.

The topographical literature of Provence has received still another accession. In the series of books on old France which Robida, a clever draughtsman, illustrates copiously and picturesquely and the "Librairie Illustrée" of Paris (New-York: J. W. Bouton) publishes in convenient form, a volume has just been given to the most poetic of the southern provinces. It is packed with sketches, forty of them in full-page plates and over two hundred in the text. These drawings are good, and give a satisfactory idea of the buildings and scenery. Mrs. Clara Erskine Clement has made in "The Queen of the Adriatic" (Estes & Lauriat) a book about Venice which testifies to her intelligence and industry. Her picture of the city is assisted by numerous photographs. She has had a crowded chronicle to reduce to the compass of her volume, and she suffers from no lack of incident.

The variegated hue which belongs to Oxford, in spite of the purely English atmosphere prevailing there, is apparent in the diversity of color in its topographical and anecdotal literature. The different writers of note who have agreed upon the fundamental virtues of the university have all drawn from it a different tone. Matthew Arnold and Andrew Lang, unlike in so many respects, were peculiarly sympathetic in their feeling for Oxford; yet between the famous tribute in the preface to the lectures on Homer and the younger critic's picture of Macclesfield, "clad in the imperial vesture of autumn," there is how great a difference! Now comes Mr. A. D. Godley, "a mere Don," as he calls himself on his title page, and in a volume on "Aspects of Modern Oxford" (Macmillan & Company) he brings yet another strain of worthy addition to lay before an Oxford which is decidedly unlike the Oxford of either Lang or Arnold. It is an unpretentious and entertaining strain. If this Don has the phariseism for which his brotherhood is notorious, he shows it only in being "not as these other Dons." The latter have a doubtful reputation. "That's — College," says a guide to a party of visitors, "and there they sit on their Turkey carpets, a-drinking of their Madeira and Burgundy and Tokay." Mr. Godley corrects this impression so far as the contingent of fellows to which he belongs is concerned. There are Dons who are not sybarites, and he is one of them. He has peered into all the corners of university life; he writes of undergraduates as well as of Dons, of eighteenth and of examination, of university journalism and of Oxford's qualifications as a place of learned leisure. His tone is neither patronizing nor unduly familiar, but airy, well bred and judicious. Never was there such a Don. His book is amusing from cover to cover (which is no small thing for a Don), and if the publishers had only given him better illustrations we would describe the examination of the work as an unmitigated pleasure. The pictures by Mr. J. H. Lorimer, which were reproduced in large plates as the book came out from month to month in "The Portfolio," were in that form artistic, but in the small page now given to them even these are unsatisfactory, and hardly any of the sketches by other draughtsmen are good. Mr. Godley should have gone to the camera for his illustrations, as the publishers of "Tom Brown's School-Days" (Dorset & Coates), in a first-rate new edition, have done. The photographs in this release of a famous book are very well made, and they reproduce views which increase the interest of the author's descriptions.

The latest holiday edition of Carlyle's "French Revolution" comes in three small illustrated volumes from the Frederick A. Stokes Company. It is called the "artist's" edition, but so exorable are the drawings which appear in the book that we deem it charitable to suppress the artist's name.

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